



Legal Marijuana Leads to More Car Crashes, Study Says

Marijuana is the illicit drug found most frequently in the blood of drivers who have been involved in car collisions. An insurance research group, The Highway Loss Data Institute, recently released a study linking car crash claims to legalized recreational marijuana.

The study results state that collision claims in Colorado, Washington, and Oregon increased by almost three percent in the years since legal recreational marijuana sales began.

In 2017, [marijuana](#) is legalized for recreational use in Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts and Alaska. According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), the short-term effects of marijuana use include:

- Altered senses (for example, seeing brighter colors)
- Altered sense of time
- Changes in mood
- Impaired body movement
- Difficulty with thinking and problem-solving
- Impaired memory

The study examined vehicle collision claims from January 2012 to October 2016. The insurance industry has been keeping an eye on claims after auto accidents began to increase in 2013 after a steady decline in previous years. Several possible factors contribute to the increase, including distracted driving due to cell phone use, road construction, and the legalization of marijuana.

The study is the first to isolate marijuana use and car collisions. “We believe that the data is saying that crash risk has increased in these states and those crash risks are associated with the legalization of marijuana,” said Matt Moore, senior vice president with the institute, in a [news article](#).